

About the Author

Arthur Conan Doyle was born in Scotland in 1859. He was interested in medicine and after finishing medical training set up his own practice. Among his favorite authors were Edgar Allan Poe, the first detective story writer, and Wilkie Collins. Collins was the father of the English horror story.

To please his wife, Doyle began to think about writing a detective story. He remembered the writings of Poe and Collins and set himself to follow in their footsteps. Doyle wanted his master detective to be striking in appearance. The detective would have to be very clever, absolutely fearless, and have an unusual manner. Above all, he must be a man with a special charm of his own. But Doyle felt he also needed someone to tell the stories. And he decided that it ought to be a doctor, like himself. And so Sherlock Holmes and Dr. John Watson were born.

Thus began the writing career of Arthur Conan Doyle. When his first stories appeared in the *Strand Magazine*, there were no great books on criminology (the study of crime). Doyle had to depend on his powers of deduction and observation to solve the problems he created for Holmes.

By 1890, Doyle had given up medicine to devote himself to writing. Soon he was famous. The tall, lean figure with the peaked cap and pipe, answering to the name Sherlock Holmes, was known almost everywhere. Doyle had intended to write only six stories, but the public would not let him drop Holmes and Watson. But drop Holmes he did. When people read of the supposed death of Holmes and his enemy Moriarty at the foot of Reichenbach Falls, (see page 70) they were stunned. But Doyle remained firm. Later Doyle gave in—a little. He wrote a play called *Sherlock Holmes*. The play was a huge success both in England and in America.

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In 1899, England was at war in South Africa. Doyle decided to enlist. He got an appointment as an army doctor. The king wanted to reward Conan Doyle by making him a knight. At first Doyle refused. But eventually the soldier-author became Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. At the age of 43 he was the world's most popular writer. Still he refused to bring Holmes "back to life."

Finally, in the spring of 1903, he gave in. Doyle wrote "The Adventure of the Empty House" and Holmes returned to his eager fans.

In 1907, Doyle married again. To please his new wife, he wrote several more Holmes stories. When World War I broke out, Doyle again volunteered. After the war, Sir Arthur began to study spiritualism. He continued to write and went on several speaking tours. In July, 1930, Arthur Conan Doyle died. His memory will live forever in the immortal characters of Sherlock Holmes and Dr. John Watson.

Adapter's Note

In preparing this edition of THE ADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES, the author's main purpose has been kept in mind. Since the stories were originally published, however, language has changed. We have modified or omitted some passages and some vocabulary in the stories. We have, however, kept as much of the originals as possible.

not ive - reason why
means - the way
opportunity - chance